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438 farmers in larger centers. This information can be checked with the testimony of farmers themselves as to where they do their buying and selling. It can be checked again with testimony upon the part of shopkeepers in the market towns as to the area from which they draw their clientele.

Plotting out these lists gives a picture of many superimposed areas. The smallest of all of them groups only a few townlands together about a crossroad or a hamlet. These areas about hamlets cluster together in turn, along the roads, to form larger areas about a village. The area about a village groups together with that round other villages, again depending upon the terrain and the roads, to form a larger district around one of the larger towns. These town-encircling areas themselves fall together to form still larger districts embracing all the farms trading in the largest centers such as Ennis, the county seat of 6,000 population, Kilrush, the metropolis of the West Clare peninsula of 4,000 population, and the city of Limerick. For Limerick draws farmers along the main roads as far as Newmarket-on-Fergus, fifteen miles into Clare. The whole county, of course, centers ultimately in Limerick, since rail, road, and river all lead there rather than over the upland divides to Galway city to the north.

443 Local fairs figure in this plotting. Traditional long-established fairs are sometimes not held within the confines of a town of the present day, though all but a few of them now take place in the streets of some town or on a modern fair-green set aside at one edge of a town. Nevertheless, the areas from which farmers come to fairs yield the same picture of overlapping distributions. The smaller fairs of little attendance draw from the smaller areas, which group together in turn. Widest of all are the areas of the largest fairs, held at Ennis and Kilrush. And there is not a village to be found on the map that does not have its fairs, carefully scheduled so that within the immediate area there will be

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no conflict of schedules. The farmer may go this week to a small village fair two miles or so away in one direction, next week three miles or so in another, and the third week to a larger town.

The list of cattle, sheep, horse, and pig fairs within County Clare given in Table 8 is taken from *Old Moore's*, the farmer's almanac. *Old Moore's* has hung in every farmer's house for nearly a century. It is his infallible guide. A glance at the map of Clare will show how many are the fairs within even a very small compass of a few miles.

TABLE 8

CALENDAR OF FAIRS IN COUNTY CLARE, 1934

Ballina, March 28
Ballyket, March 22, July 4, August 17 (cattle), December 1
Ballynacally, February 28, April 14, June 14, July 30, September 16, November 8
Ballyvaughan, May 29, June 24, September 16, December 18
Bauroe, *see* Feakle
Bridgetown, January 24, April 18, June 16, November 25
Broadford, April 13, June 21, September 13, November 21
Carrigaholt, June 1, July 5, August 19 (cattle, pigs, and sheep)
Clare Castle, May 30 (pigs day previous), November 11 (pigs day previous)
Clonroad (Ennis), May 8, July 31, October 13, December 2
Connolly, January 2, April 17, July 18, October 3
Corofin, February 19, May 20, July 20, September 12, November 22, December 14 (cattle, sheep, and pigs)
Doonbeg, February 8, April 1, May 2, July 1 and 26, October 8, December 16
Ennis (*see also* Clonroad), January 5 (sheep), 6, 11 (pigs only), February 2, 8 (pigs only), March 2, 3, 8 (pigs only), April 4 (horses and sheep), 5, 10 (pigs only), 16 (cattle), 18 and 19 (sheep), May 10 (pigs only), June 14 (pigs only), July 12 (pigs only), August 9 (pigs only), September 4 (cattle and sheep), 13 (pigs only), October 11 (pigs only), November 8 (pigs only), December 13 (pigs only)
Ennistymon, January 22, February 12, March 24, April 15, May 15, July 2, August 22, September 29, November 19, December 13. Pig market last Tuesday of each month
Feakle, January 24, February 17 (Bauroe), March 24, April 24, May 17 (Bauroe), June 20, July 24, August 17 (Bauroe), September 24, October 24, November 17 (Bauroe), December 20
Kilclaran, June 1
Kildysart, January 21, February 20, March 15, April 24, May 22, July 15, August 27, October 24, December 18. Pig fair second Thursday of each month
Kilenena, March 11, June 13, September 12, December 12
Kilfenora, February 25, April 9, June 2, August 15, October 9, November 4 (cattle, sheep, and pigs)
Kilkee, January 8, February 24, April 15, May 13, July 10, August 13, October 5, November 26. Pig fair second Tuesday of each month
Kilkishen, January 20, March 15, May 9, August 31, December 23

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TABLE 8 (*continued*)

443 Killaloe, third Monday in January, February 28, March 28, April 12, May 20, June 26, July 16, August 12, September 3, October 20, November 17, first Tuesday after Christmas, cattle and sheep
Kilmihill, January 7, February 15, March 30, May 19, July 18, August 15, September 28, November 1, December 13
Kilmurry M'Mahon, May 24
Kilrush, last Wednesday in each month, for pigs; January 16, February 22, April 13, May 10, June 12, September 1, October 12, November 16, for cattle and sheep; March 25, first Thursday in June, October 10, November 23, for horses
Labasheeda, June 10, August 10, October 10, December 10
Liscannor, January 6
Lisdoonvarna, April 1, May 1, November 1, December 1
Miltown Malbay, February 1, March 9, May 4, June 21, August 11, September 10, October 18, December 9. Pigs first Thursday of each month
Mullagh, January 1, March 17
Newmarket-on-Fergus, December 20
O'Brien's Bridge, March 18, July 25, November 17
O'Callaghan's Mills, June 27, November 14
Quin, July 7 (cattle and sheep), November 1 (horses, cattle, and sheep)
Ruane, June 17, September 26
Scarriff, January 5, February 1, March 3, April 3, May 1, June 2, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 3, December 9, pigs day previous
Sixmilebridge, December 5
Spancil-hill, June 23, 24
Tulla, last Tuesday in January and February, March 25, April 25, May 13, June 15, July 19, August 15, September 29, October 19, November 9, December 7

438 In these ever-larger overlapping market areas the natural
133 physical divisions of the countryside are well represented. The great central mass of Mount Callan divides West Clare from the rest of the county. It divides as well the market districts of Ennis and Kilrush. In the valley of the Fergus River, which drains the highlands of Mid-Clare to the north and East Clare beyond the corcasses (rough marshlands) to the east, the human flow of trade and produce exchange tends downward to the towns of Ennis and Clarecastle, at the head of tidewater. The high country marking the divides over into the Inagh and Cullinagh rivers and into the lake country of North Clare, just south of the gaunt hills
438 of Burren, divides the market district of Ennis from the smaller districts upon which the villages of Ennistymon, Corrofin, and Lisdoonvarna draw. Yet these villages in their turn are within the region of Clare from which the

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The methods of transport in the countryside are related
to the distances to be traveled and the errands to be run. These things are matters of the organization and relationships of family and community. It is not only the means of transport which can be related to the constituent relationships of country social life. Each kind of farm product exported and farm need purchased involves a different distance of travel, a holder of a different status in family and community, and a different relation with the outsider.

The goods the farmer produces travel to the centers at which they are exchanged over distances which are commensurate with their value, their importance in farm economy, and their association with the status of the persons in the rural communities under whose charge they are produced. Horses take most care, are most valuable, and are the very special charge of the man of the house. The horse fair accordingly draws from the largest area. Cattle are the great money crop, the export staple. Accordingly the cattle fairs are among the chief lodestones of the larger centers, drawing from the deepest hinterlands of the major market areas. They are masculine affairs. Likewise potatoes and corn crops, oats, come to market only in the major centers. Farm fathers bring them down by horse and car from the deepest hinterlands.

Pigs represent a much shorter period of work and care. They are often in woman's province. The pig fairs are smaller gatherings, held in small centers, drawing from small hinterlands. Lesser vegetables, principally cabbage, travel no such distance as potatoes, and women often sell them. Finally, butter and eggs travel the shortest distance of all. They are often bartered at the crossroad centers. Before creameries were introduced, salted firkins or tubs of butter, representing a longer accumulation, went longer distances to the village centers.

Creamery associations were not established until the middle of the time of research in County Clare. They are

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town classes on the other. Let it suffice to show his place that in a recitation of such a shopkeeper's intimates and associates it is most often not the farmers but the members of the community who are in a similar position who figure. His associates are the parish priest, the schoolmaster, the local police, and the local "rancher." When marriages are made for his daughters, they are made with big farmers, and husbands are got at considerably greater distances than in the case of the small farmers. Along with his associates, he makes up the rural middle class, at once a halfway point and a channel of movement for the infiltration of gradual change, poised between the small farmers of the countryside and the middle and upper classes of the urban centers.

Other agencies of exchange and contact between rural communities and the outside world are as much overlaid with social sentiment and custom expressive of valuations upon local status as is the position of the crossroad shopkeeper. The form of exchange is ceremonial, and a ritual exists to express much more than the mere mechanism of contact and exchange.

The two chief occasions of economic exchange outside the shops at the crossroad or in the towns are the best examples of such ceremonial. Let us take the fairs first. The fairs are still the most important mechanism of exchange between the small farm producers and the middlemen who start farm produce upon its journey to the ultimate consumer. Nothing has risen to threaten them seriously even in this day of economic complexity. The farmers of the rural hinterland of towns and villages journey with cattle, pigs, corn, and wool to market, to sell them that day or else to carry them home again. Some big farmers sell from the land direct to dealers and jobbers. A few small farmers sell direct to neighbors. These are exceptions, and sales in market and fair are well-nigh universal.

The fairs are not only universal, they are also elaborately

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443 conventional. How much, if anything, survives of medieval commerce in them and how much comes down from the days of the medieval Irish *aonach* is a matter for the historian. In ancient times the fair was a gathering for purposes much more widely embracing than exchange of produce. The *aonach* was often the occasion of a royal or chieftainly court, a bardic contest, and local games. Nothing of this remains today.

443 Cattle, horse, sheep, and pig fairs are fixed, habitual
424 occasions. Their dates and places of meeting are universal knowledge in the countryside. An extension of medieval English law has made most of them proprietary, making of the right to hold a fair a legal title to be bought and sold and charged for in the shape of tolls. But they are public occasions none the less.

443 The lore of fairs is an inexhaustible fund of information among the small farmers. Among them, indeed, the size of the local fairs is a matter of local pride. It is an index of the industry and wealth of the region. The state of prices is as much a clue to the fate of the local universe as the financial vagaries of Wall Street or the City reveal the destinies of the world.

443 All this is natural enough where fairs and local markets
462 represent the chief outlets for produce and the chief source of monetary income. As cattle are the chief concern of the
562 males of the family and source of ultimate success or failure for the family, so the cattle fair is the great testing ground for male prowess, skill, and intelligence. In the market place of the cattle fair, the male command of the family corporation and masculine representation of that corporation in the community makes public display of its stewardship. On this stage, the farmer can meet the outsider on his own terms and with his own weapons of shrewdness and experience.

437 The farmers criticize bitterly any departure from cus-
443 tomary procedure. Even though they complain that the fair

gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation.

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers.

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance.

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities.

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the

443 484 morning. To dress, snatch a cup of tea, and bless himself takes only a moment. Usually he has arranged for companionship, and he and his neighbors drive their beasts along the roads together. Company makes the night less lonely and the handling of the animals easier. Driving them is a skilled task against the dangers of the road, both natural and eerie. The men hope to reach the site of the fair before daybreak. They want to arrive in time to find a "good pitch," as they call it. They want to take their stand in the drawn-up lines of men and beasts where buyers are most likely to notice them. His pitch taken, each man stands over his beasts, ready for the inspection of buyers, careful that his beasts do not wander off or get mixed up with the others.

443 438 [291] As dawn breaks, the buyers arrive. They are nearly always cattle dealers and big farmers. Only occasionally are they local men. One can recognize them as they hurry about, businesslike, wearing trench coat, bowler, and leggings. The costume is practically a uniform with them, quite different from the drab coats and boots of the countrymen. They carry chalk or scissors and pencils and a notebook to mark the beasts of their choice and record their purchases.

In the good days of high prices, as during the World War, the buyers arrive even before dawn and buy by lantern light. All the good beasts of the fair may be gone by the time the sun comes up. On occasions of little demand, however, the buyers have time to look about carefully and make the exhaustive tests of quality that long experience has convinced them are the secret of commercial success.

443 437 The procedure of choice, bargaining, and sale is as unchanging a ritual as any church provides. The buyer — dealer or farmer — strolls unconcernedly along the lines of farmers and their beasts. Here and there he greets an acquaintance. But he is appraising the animals all the while. Rigid custom forbids his breaking in on a bargain already

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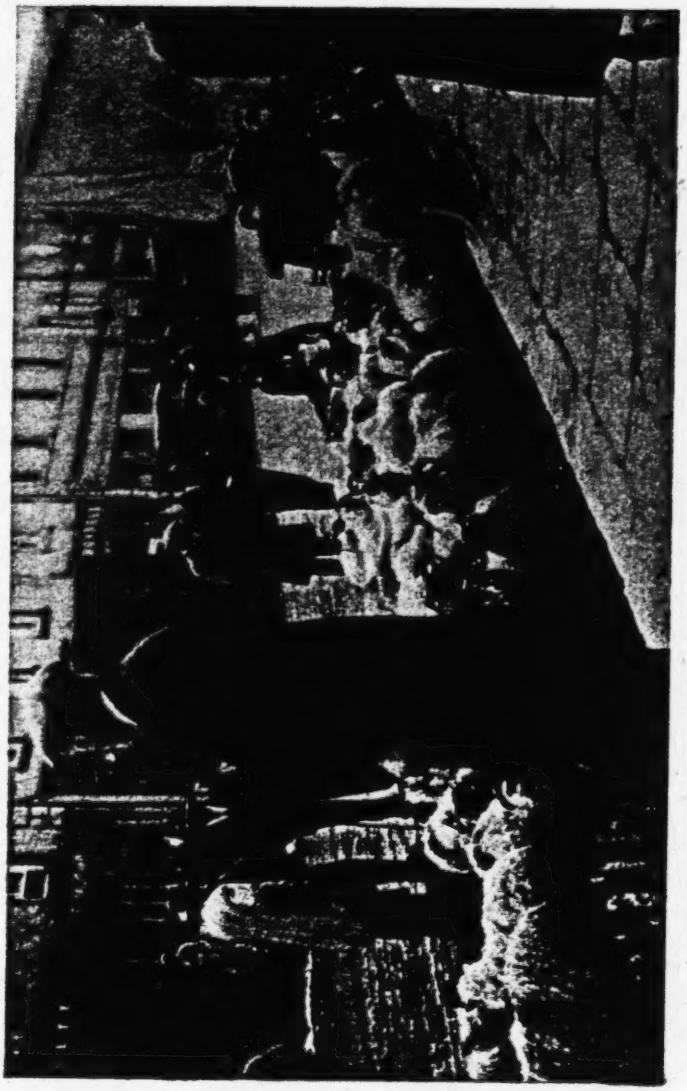

SHEEP FAIR IN A MARKET TOWN

[facing p. 300]

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443 begun. He must find a farmer who is free for the moment.
437 Should he catch sight of an unoccupied owner of a likely animal, he crosses over to him and begins the business of the day. His first move is to ask the price, knowing well he will get one larger than the farmer really hopes to receive. This first exchange is merely the occasion for the closer inspection of the cattle and a notice to the other that a bargain is in process.

Such a move is a signal. As questions and offers pass between buyer and farmer, a crowd of bystanders soon collects. They offer suggestions, shout out commentaries, encourage one party or the other, contributing animatedly to the debate, which will eventually culminate in a sale at a price which instantly becomes the knowledge of buyers and sellers alike.

One of the bystanders almost invariably adopts a well-recognized role. He becomes an intermediary between buyer and seller. He turns all his energy, backed by the plaudits of the crowd, to the consummation of the sale. He may be a friend of either buyer or seller, brought in for his shrewdness or experience or skill, or he may be a wandering tinker in hopes of a commission from one or the other. He may even be only an interested bystander.

The intermediary is almost always a major factor in the transaction. He is the one who forges an agreement over the distrust and shyness of the farmer and the autocratic impatience of the buyer. All the parties are vociferous, the farmer in praise of his wares and the buyer in depreciation of them. The intermediary turns grandiose claims into laughter, wears down the resistance of the farmer by wit, and raises the offers of the buyer by appeals to fair dealing. Time and time again he will drag back a buyer who rushes off in well-feigned disgust at an outrageous demand or push forward the hand of a reluctant farmer to be seized by the buyer in the handclasp that marks completion of the sale.

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443 437 Amid the encouragements of the bystanders, he repeats the old bargaining cries. He shouts, "Split the difference!" when taking-price and asking-price approach one another, and he wrings concessions from each party until agreement is reached. They end with a handshake between them. The sale is made.

If the buyer is ready to pay for his purchase on the spot, the older custom, all three parties step off the fair ground into any convenient near-by pub. There they celebrate the transaction at the expense of the buyer, the purchase money changes hands, and they make assurances all round. The seller turns back a "luck penny" out of the purchase price. This is a payment often as large as half a crown, depending upon the transaction, repaid to the buyer in token of good faith.

Custom is changing here. A large-scale dealer may have little time or inclination for such amenities. He may give the seller a ticket or slip of paper as his record of the transaction and arrange to see him later in the day. He stands, slip in hand, ready to receive payment in his turn. Later on, then, at the time arranged, the farmer takes his place with the others with whom the dealer has been dealing during the day. Even then the farmer usually gives back a luck penny, even though he knows the dealer may reckon it a reduction of price rather than a ceremonial gesture. For it is a traditional gesture of independence and equality on his part.

443 Fairs beginning at dawn are usually over by noon. By that time the farmers are clear that they must sell at a sacrifice or drive the beasts home unsold to wait for another day. If prices are good, eager buyers have snatched up everything except unsalable scrubs.

443 437 For the farmer this mart is more than a simple economic exchange. The form of exchange is as important as the exchange itself. It is an instance of traditional behavior

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on the part of the small farmers, supported by sanctions and sentiment. In the ritual of bargaining and exchange in the fair, many relationships are acted out: the relations between farmer and farmer; the relations between farmers and their sons and the boys of their kindred; the relations between farmers and persons from the outside world of big farms, business and trade, and the towns. Throughout the whole of the proceedings one can see all these get a periodic, ceremonial reiteration here.

The economic circumstances of the fair are only part of the picture the fair presents. The fair and market are almost the only sources of monetary income for the farmers. They are the chief occasions for realizing the labor of a year's agricultural work. Consequently they are also the traditional occasions for settling debts, for making payments on accounts with shopkeepers. They are also the occasion of stocking up with everything from boots and clothes to feed and manure.

Indeed the fairs are the chief occasions of commercial and monetary activity in the agricultural counties. They are periodic high points of local activity in which laborers and local government have as much interest as the farmers. They are great events at which the economy of the western and southern parts of Ireland gets its only general, public, and spectacular circulation of funds. Yet they have a ceremonial side equally vivid.

The lining up of the farmers and their sons before their cattle to await the inspection and commencement of bargaining we must not idly dismiss as a mere convenience in bringing cattle to the attention of the prospective buyer. Like the other conventions of conduct in the fair, it deserves a careful treatment. These conventions can be put under a common explanatory scheme with those of farm life. In the arrangements of events in the fairs there are new events among persons which follow the same course as in the

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443 daily life of the family members at home on the farm and in the rural community. But in this case there is a far different setting.

443 437 At a fair the dealers or buyers initiate transactions or terminate the bargaining at will. They are free to choose both the cattle they shall buy and the farmers with whom they shall deal. This is the same organization of relations between farmers and outsiders as that which prevails in the local community. The efforts of the intermediary and the emotional connotations of the luck penny as well as the grumbles of the farmers fit into this pattern of social and economic relations. There is some antagonism here, of the farmers against the others, but the solidarities of the two parties carry their own check. Prices may be so low that the farmers refuse to sell. Buyers band together to force a low price on various occasions. Resentments are mutual and common enough. But the ceremonial survives. It is an enactment of the community relations of the small farmers. It will change only as those relations change. The familistic farmer stands for himself, and his community is built only on gossip, public opinion, and common values. His mechanism of economic exchange expresses his social order and the community it serves.

443 Beside the cattle fairs there are fairs for dealing in sheep, pigs, and horses. These take much the same form, their complexity and importance depending upon the importance of the animal sold. Sheep, for example, are not so important in farm economy as cattle. Neither do they command such high prices. Consequently, sheep fairs are less imposing affairs, often held in conjunction with cattle fairs. The conventions are the same as in the cattle fairs.

443 437 Horse fairs again are very similar. Because of the higher value of the horse and the use of the horse for sport and ceremony among the upper classes, the horse fairs are less frequent than cattle fairs, but more elaborate. In the case of

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cattle, the farmer must usually drive the beasts he has sold to the station himself. In the case of horses, the buyer exercises a greater care. A deal is closed not only by the usual handclasps but by the change of halters as well. Horses are put through their paces very carefully, sometimes in secrecy off in a side field or down a dark street. The majority of horses are sold between farmers and destined for farm work, but there is always a strong atmosphere of riches and brilliant chance about the proceedings. Many are the tales of half-bred horses, picked up for a song, that have come to win all before them.

Since most of the fairs are legally proprietary, they are protected by law. In many cases the towns have bought out the rights to tolls from private families, finding them a welcome source of revenue. To safeguard these rights, action may be brought against illicit buyers and sellers. In practice, however, it is only in horse-dealing that the owners of the tolls exercise vigilance, since there the tolls are so great. All this contributes to the atmosphere of importance that surrounds the horse fairs.

Pigs are sold more frequently, especially as they represent a great deal shorter period of development. Every town has its bonham and pig market. Every Saturday may witness a few transactions complete with the same rituals of inspection, repartee, and bargaining, but there are times of greater activity as well. It is generally only in pig markets that women are to be seen at fairs.

The second chief occasions of economic exchange, which afford further examples of the ceremonial surrounding the small farmer's mechanisms of contact with the outside world, are the produce markets of the towns. In them similar enactments of family and community relations are to be seen.

Each market town has its weekly market day. The day is fixed so as not to conflict with that of any other near-by

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443 center. Only in the central largest town of a whole area is Saturday the market day *par excellence*. In Clare, for instance, only Ennis and Kilrush have Saturday markets. Smaller centers set other days of the week aside.

In the larger towns such markets may be held in stores and yards owned by the municipality. More often custom has set aside a section of a street or a central square for each kind of produce. In Ennis a separate yard and shed serves as a butter market, another yard and shed with a weigh-house serves for corn and wool. Pigs, lambs, cabbage, and other vegetables are sold in the streets.

The principal commodities sold at the weekly markets in Clare are oats, mangels, turnips, wool, potatoes, hay, straw, cabbage, calves, lambs, kids (an Easter delicacy), pigs, bonhams, chickens, geese, other poultry. Records of these sales itemize the commerce of the whole hinterland in agricultural produce. Public institutions in the town buy through contracts awarded to various suppliers, the weighing and delivery taking place through the public market. Dealers for each product visit the markets. Even those who have come recently to use lorries that tour the country crossroads still appear at the weekly markets.

443 For those interested in a typical view of this kind of com-
438 merce, Table 9 presents a picture of the tolls received in the town of Ennis during the years 1927–33. The table is arranged as a calendar and gives average toll receipts for each product for each month during the period. One can see the monthly fluctuations at a glance and the annual periods of activity in sales. The chief change during the period was the dropping off of butter sales, a fact accounted for by the rise of creameries in other parts of the county and the introduction of the lorry. Otherwise sales were of much the same volume each year. As the tolls were constant during the period charted, the figures are a very good index to the local produce marketed.

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TABLE 9

Sales of Ennis Market, 1927–1933 [a]

Item	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Cattle	£54.00	?[a]	0	0	0	20.00	?[e]	0	?[g]	30.00	41.00	44.00
Sheep	£19.00	?[b]	0	?[e]	0	?[d]	?[f]	0	?[h]	3.00	4.00	5.00
Butter	£ 8.00	18.00	25.00	27.00	32.00	28.00	26.00	15.00	6.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Potatoes	£14.00	9.00	6.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	9.00	9.00	17.00
Roots	£ 3.00	.75	.13	0	0	0	0	2.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	4.00
Corn	£ 3.00	.50	.13	0	0	12.00	30.00	29.00	17.00	8.00	5.00	9.00
Hay	£13.00	1.00	.13	.13	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	9.00
Wool	£ .75	2.00	13.00	7.00	3.00	4.00	7.00	2.00	.50	.20	1.00	.50
Pigs	262	56	37	46	76	118	115	118	118	94	84	90
Bonhams	1122	155	111	84	94	99	117	115	64	42	59	112

[a] Toll receipts are given in pounds or hundredths of pounds except in the case of the last two, which are given in shillings. The figures are average total receipts for the month named over the six-year period.

[a] Figures only for 1928, 1932 (£49, £11 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[b] Figures only for 1928, 1932 (£22, £17 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[c] Figures only for 1932 (£4). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[d] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£8, £12 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[e] Figures only for 1932 (£18). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[f] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£35, £37 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[g] Figures only for 1932 (£11). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[h] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£9, £10 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.

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443 In buying and selling in the town markets, bargaining
437 ritual is very much the same as in the fairs. Every seller
must negotiate for himself, but the luck penny is neglected.
462 The sexual division of labor on the farm is amply represented. The women stand over and bargain about their eggs, butter, and poultry. Men alone are to be seen dealing in pigs, lambs, wool, and corn. Yet it is not unusual to see a woman dealing for a sack of potatoes or for bonhams.

443 In all these transactions the usual ritual of bargaining
437 appears. It is customary, though in a curtailed and abbreviated form, in the purchasing that the small farmer does in the shops. It appears wherever persons of diverse allegiance are brought together in the life of the farmers. It appears, as we have seen, in the making of a match between two families. Like monetary payment for services, it figures only in the external relations of the farmers' groups. Indeed, it is the behavior characteristically connected with monetary payment.

Occasionally a small farmer buys from another in his own community, but the practice is rare. Goods change hands rather through the mechanisms of borrowing and gifts in the patterns of kinship and cooring. The difference of behavior must be referred to the different relationships.

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221 241 462 fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each 'hard' day is more than welcome, for then work in the fields can go on. By St. Patrick's day, they say in Clare, the potatoes should all be 'down'; after that there still remains much to do, [776] though the worst is over. St. Patrick promised that after his day *every* day would 'come hard'.

Through the rest of the spring, work is at its most intense. Potatoes must be 'stirred' and 'landed'; other root crops 'put down'. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the season of greater milk yields and intensified butter-making. Before that in February and March [443] the 'great spring fairs' take place, and the year's buying and selling of cattle must be done.

Then, gradually, with the return of warm weather and the drying-off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is often the first summer month. Soon the bogs are dry enough for cutting the year's supply of turf and for stacking it to dry under the summer warmth at the bog's edge.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the first fruits of the farmer's labour begin to appear. The first crop is cabbage, which was planted at odd times very early. It is practically the only green of the [261] diet and old people remember June or July *an chabáiste*, 'the hungry month', when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semi-starvation upon cabbage. Today new varieties of potatoes mature as early as June. But

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a more elaborate scale perhaps, the country farm house kitchen. Like its country counterpart it is the seat of family life.

Upstairs, a front room facing the street is transformed, by family portraits, an ornamental mantle and a piece or two of good mahogany, into a ceremonial parlour. Behind this, range the bedrooms of the family. Perhaps, in affluence and refinement there is an upstairs sitting-room as well. For the shop is no mere place of business. It is first of all a household, of which one section and one only is devoted to the world of affairs.

The family which this household houses and supports, in the majority of cases, works the shop in much the same way that the family of the farmer works the land. It conducts its business as a united corporation in which all members may take a hand and each have his place. Husband and wife tend the counter together and between them shopkeeping is divided; sons and daughters work as shop-assistants, as long as they remain at home. Only when affluence lifts the shop to importance and dignifies the shopkeeper with the title and station of merchant, expanding his business to wholesaling, is this arrangement greatly modified.

Yet, self-sufficient as this familistic shop-world is, the countryman has many a connection with it. It lives its own quiet life and plies its own trade so different from the farmer's work upon the farm. Town life breeds its own sentiment and weaves its

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369 own bonds, making of the townsmen a community
443 of conduct, feeling and values. But, nevertheless, despite this isolating process which shuts the countryman out, he is not at all remote. The first great tie, and the obvious one, is the economic. The country-dwellers buy the shop goods which move across the townsmen's counters and bring in the moneys realized in fair and market in exchange for retail goods.

But the economic tie is not sufficient, in Irish life, for permanence. Time and assimilation have woven a full social pattern round it. The pattern is really an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order. The market town fills its role as a metropolis of native sentiment in that extension.

There is a saying in the towns of Ireland that summarizes well the movements of town life. "The country-people flock into the towns," they say, "and the townspeople all die out of them." A moment's investigation bears out the fact. Though the town, too, is a familistic world, like the countryside, it differs in that it is a world in slow movement. Generation after generation, a new family sets up shop or public-house, flourishes or fails and then passes on out of the town's life; pressed from behind by the vigour of new country blood or graduated upward economically and socially into the professions. Some families withstand the movement a long time; here and there one can point to

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a century or more of burgher succession. Others have known a more rapid change of station downward or upward in a single generation. But all of them together can feel the compelling sweep of movement which is part of town life.

Is it really the countryman's vigour that sweeps thus through the Irish towns? I know that is the usual explanation, where such a situation in town and urban life exists. Much has been written in Ireland and in all modern countries about the debilitating effect of urban and near-urban life. It is the fashion to lament the onward sweep which fills the towns and cities with fresh blood, names and faces and pushes out the old. Landmarks change out of recognition; the old families disappear mysteriously, and one can cry out that a new barbarian flood is sweeping away the life's blood of the educated urban classes.

But such a view is very blind. It is astigmatic from a too close looking upon the immediate, instant case. It neglects entirely the organization of human behaviour and sentiment, unreasoned and unplanned though it be, that makes our human societies. It confounds the force of ordered change with weakness and decay.

Nowhere would the view fail worse than in southern Ireland. The countryman who presses in upon the townsman does not drive him out through superior vigour, nor does the townsman fade away in weak decay. Each is caught in a social

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369 pattern which fashions many lifetimes and their desires, ambitions, achievements and failures. History and habit have wrought a series of pathways almost as definite as those of a termite's nest; but history and habit care little which termite follows them. Vigour, if it exists, can only be measured in the ease with which the path-follower travels along his course, and the change which his passing makes upon it.

I am sure I shall be accused of a thorough-going, even mystical determinism in human affairs. But let us follow the countryman and the townsdweller and see wherein my heresy is justifiable and wherein we may temper it.

369 443 571 In the communities my colleagues and I came to know, the country customer who brings his trade into the shop does so in response to the ties of kinship and friendliness. He 'goes with' a shopkeeper or publican, most often, as he 'coors' with his country friends. This is not his only incentive but it is his principal one. The social order of which he is a part embraces the town-dwelling shopkeeper; trade follows friendship. Many indeed are the shops which rely almost entirely upon this 'family trade'. Others know it to be the base upon which they must build.

But, we remember, the relation of kinship and friendship is reciprocal. The shopkeeper is bound in his turn to his 'family trade'. He owes obligation to the 'country cousins' who buy from him. In

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this way, a durable bond is created which exists over and above the economics of retail trade. It is of the kind that the countryman understands best; it charges the relationship with interest for him; it infuses it with sentiment, habit and reciprocal force. The shopkeeper, too, can rely upon it. Even though he be caught in the demands it makes upon him, he, nevertheless, can rely heavily upon its expectancies.

The ordinary modest retail shop or pub lives upon this tie. In many cases the tie infuses business with a social content which becomes co-extensive with the distributive function the shop performs in economic exchange. If the tie is weakened, if it dies, the shop weakens and dies too. And with it dies the family which derives livelihood, status and much of its corporate existence from that shop. For possession of the shop gives status and prestige and marks one's social place for the family, as much as does the 'farm of land' in the countryside. The family's 'name is on the shop' in much the same way as the country family's name is 'on the land'. In fact, almost symbolically, that name is literally on the shop, for in Ireland most often a single word —the family name—rather than any announcement of the type of retail trade carried on—hangs over the door to proclaim the shop's existence to the buying public. And when the 'family trade' dies, that name dies out of the shop world with it.

Business, then, in the market-towns is no frantic

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369 search for better qualities at lower prices. It is first
443 of all a technique in social relations. It demands an
571 orientation to a social order, that of the countryman-customer. Customer and retailer are brought together, not primarily through a cheap price nor an eye-compelling package, but through personalities and through blood and marriage bonds.

In this social context, the interests of shopkeeper and farmer coincide. If the shop is to live it must renew its ties with the rural hinterland; if the farm on the land is to grow in status and strength it must ally itself in a higher and wider social sphere, and in so doing, provide well for its dispersed children. This coincidence of interest determines much of the shopkeeper's life; through it the countryman has assimilated the town to his own way of life.

The town represents that higher and wider sphere for the countryman. Its life is that of a higher station in life; it is a centre of metropolitan prestige. So the farmer can come to send his son into a shop, as he sends a daughter 'into the land' in match-making, to provide him with a better place in life, to make a gentleman of him. The shopkeeper may need a young and pliable assistant in his business. He must have one upon whose kindred he can depend for extension of his trade. He takes in the farmer's son.

In this way, the first of the social bonds that unite the shop and the pub to the rural hinterland

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is created. A pathway is created along which human lives can move and play out their roles in social life. One of the farmer's sons can hope, with luck and affluence, to become a shop-assistant in the market-town. The portion he receives upon the dispersal of the farm family may well take the form of such a start in life. The farmer-father pays the boy's apprentice bond.

Formal apprenticeships still flourish in Irish country towns and nowhere better than in the shop or pub. The country boy is bound in custom and in law to his new employer and learns the alien way of business and social habit under a master's eye. Eventually he may succeed to a shop of his own, but first he 'must serve his time'. In this, rural Ireland has preserved an older form and charged it with its own peculiar content. The town-bred lad is seldom hired; he brings no rural kindred with him. Then, too, he is neither so impressionable nor so easy to control. The country lad, at first, is both. The shopkeeper taps the social order of the countryside in the person of his fledgling 'prentice boy.

But time brings ordered change in social life, in the town no less than in the countryside. The boy grows up; he serves his time. He acquires the experience and the technique which fit him for the role for which his parents paid his apprentice bond. Unless he is to retain a subordinate and unimportant place as shop-assistant for a lifetime, he must move on. He must acquire a shop himself.

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369 And so he does, if he humanly can, and to that end
443 his savings go.
571 So much for the farmer's son. In his person, he
166 represents a rough one-half of the countryside's invasion of the town. Yet he has sisters, too, at home upon the farm. The attraction of metropolis is no less great for them; they, too, must be provided for in the dispersal of the family upon the land. And with them goes the rural social order and the ties of kinship and community.

In this fact one can see another rough half of the
369 rural tide that sweeps into the ranks of business in
443 the towns. The shop-world taps its country hinter-
571 land again in the persons of the daughters of the
584 farms. The farmer must, if he can, marry his daughter off well; prestige and alliance go with her and the dowry which she carries as her portion. The shopkeeper must renew his ties with the countryside with each new generation, if the shop is to survive. In this coincidence of interest, again, a great deal of the marriage custom of the town revolves. The world of shops and pubs is caught within the ordered mechanism of change called *match-making*, in the same way as is the 'farm of land'.

Currently in country towns, the 'match' is the accepted type of marriage for publican and shopkeeper as much as it is for the farmer. The more sophisticated and more affluent shopkeepers, those who are close, or would like to be, to the higher

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status of merchant, would repudiate the rustic word. They would tell you that they make instead 'proper marriage settlements'. But their humbler fellow-tradesmen, whose shops have not such pretensions, are closer to the soil. They would admit what is for both of them the fact.

Consequently, one can find in the town, round the shop and pub, the same reorganization of human relationships that goes forward when the country match transfers land and household command to a marrying son. But there is one great difference. In the town one must bring a country-woman in.

If one analyses the census of marriage, age and occupation in the Free State made in 1926, one can see how general this reorganization is. It lies behind the statistics of a great part of the country. Without it, one cannot explain the striking uniformity that gives a roughly similar grouping of individuals by age, by sex, by marital conditions, in all the towns, except the large cities, of southern Ireland. For instance, shop-assistants everywhere are young unmarried men and women. Entrance into the ownership of shop and public-house takes place at the same age as does entrance into married state. Though the towns show no such marked extremes as do the country districts, marriage is long delayed and bachelorhood and spinsterhood are very frequent by world standards. One need not be a demographer or statistician to be struck with the parallel, and to wonder at such coincidence between

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369 the lives of the followers of occupations so dissimilar
443 as agriculture and retail commerce.
571 For this statistical correspondence overlies the
584 facts of social life. It merely expresses numerically the community of custom between country and town. If one cares to probe deeper, among the lives whose events the census records, one finds the custom at the root of human behaviour and human sentiment. One lays bare the outline of the balance in which the lives of townsmen and countrymen co-mingle in a larger whole.

For setting up a shop means setting up a family; it means marriage and the bringing-in of a country girl. There are exceptions, of course; custom is only a general imperative. Nevertheless, the country match is the generality.

Most often, the shopkeeper-father turns over the shop to the son who is to succeed him when that son marries. The daughter-in-law is the daughter of a farmer of the countryside. Her people 'walk the shop' as they would 'walk the land' in a country match. Long negotiation equates the dowry they give with the shop, its stock, its debts and its prospects. The two families cast the agreement into proper legal form. The shopkeeper transfers his control and his ownership to the son and the son's wife. The other shop children are dispersed and are provided for, where possible. The older generation retires; and a new family is established in business in the town.

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This is a smooth and orderly transition. The shop keeps its identification with human ties unbroken, from parents to children. It renews them once again, outward into the rural hinterland, in the persons of kindred the young wife brings 'into the shop'. The shop's life blood is renewed: literally, in the persons of the new master and mistress; socially, in the extensions of kinship and alliance; and economically, because trade follows personal ties.

The erstwhile apprentice boy, the farmer's son, who sets up 'on his own', follows the same course and makes a comparable transition. His marriage and his setting up his own shop most often coincide. His savings and the bride's fortune make possible, together, many a start in the life of the market-towns. Money buys the shop, credit may stock its shelves, but it is the social alliance, contracted in a country marriage, which supplies the trade upon which business rests.

One might ask here if the role of the sexes is not reversible. Might not the young man marry-in into the shop, and the girl rise from assistantship to full-fledged ownership? Naturally, such a course might well be taken; a social order allows many channels. It has not the rigidity of formal law. Or the girl may inherit a shop, or receive one, in the towns, as her particular portion. For to set up a daughter in a small shop is to provide well for her and to assure her station for her lifetime; even

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369 though little wealth will come to her through that
443 shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases,
571 these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a
584 finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly
369 universal occurrence where a society preserves
443 some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural
571 necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic
582 order. In India, for instance, it is immediately recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

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gain a foothold in the world of shops. For that, the countryman is willing, currently, to pay about twice the usual dowry-price.

And in his willing adherence to custom, stability is achieved. The relationship between class and class, like that in the countryside between kindred and kindred, attains some permanence of form. The bride carries social bonds with her; in this case she carries them upward and townward into the shops and pubs of metropolis.

Her brother, on the other hand, carries with him another social function, in his capacity of male. His place is that of a potential fatherhood in a line of patrilineal descent. He carries on a corporate name upon the land or shop. Where he cannot inherit, in such descent, a sure place among his fellows, he must win it. The man is the bread-winner who carves out a place for his line; round him the family must be grouped. The woman, on the other hand, is the uniting force within the grouping. In this dichotomization of social role between the sexes, the Irish town and the Irish countryside, like the Church to which they both subscribe, are agreed. Hypergamy takes its form in the agreement. Along the lines laid down by the social bonds of apprenticeship and hypergamous marriage, the world of the market-town and the rural hinterland are united; along the same lines the flow of the country-people townward moves.

Once again, then, we see how complete the in-

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369 443 571 582

clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

182 369 443 571 584

This order, one must not forget, is nothing esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire among the constituent human beings, both make it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

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to cook, sew, keep house, and she hasn't a lot of grand ideas in her head that the town girls have. When she comes to town, she feels she's got on in the world; while the town girl will only be wanting more than her husband can give her, or she won't do her share."

The speaker was a townsman, born and bred, but one can see that he endorsed the system heartily. He was an older man who had made his adaptations to social life successfully.

For others, for those whom the life of the town has caught up and who have acquired 'grand ideas', as the last speaker called them, adaptation is more difficult. The town, as I have said, engenders its own near-urban values. These come to conflict with those which unite the shop world to its countryside. Thus ambition is born, which means a severance of old ties. The ties become thwarting chains, and here and there a young man, caught within the pulls of two incompatible forces, becomes a bitter and scornful rebel.

One such young man, who found himself swept back into the ways of the market-towns after a brief flight into larger horizons in Dublin, fought against the fate that closed him in. He tells his own story: "This town is very dull. I don't understand what brings you here. The trouble with everybody here is that they are all misfits and that they are all in jobs they loathe. Successful men give you good counsel: they tell you to work hard and forget your

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182 troubles. But that is because they are in occupations
369 which they like. There is something glamorous
● 443 about being a solicitor, and everybody comes to
571 you. I would like to have been one. There will be
584 opportunity here when the older men clear out.

"I went off and studied in Dublin for a long while. Then my father died and my mother was stricken with paralysis and I had to come back here and work behind the counter, which I loathe. There's no one else now but my sister. Most shopkeepers make out through their family trade; and the only thing for me to do now is to marry some rich woman in from the country and then all her friends will come in. If you want to get married here there is nothing in it at all but to look out for a country girl. If you don't want to make a fool of yourself and go in for politics, you have to depend on your friends and your wife's friends, and if you can, you've got to marry a girl from the country. Then she'll bring in all her people for miles round, with all their relatives and their married families, and they're the ones that will buy your flour and sugar and tea. You can't get on without them."

182 In this rebellious young man's lament, another
369 aspect of the life of the towns appears and takes its proper place. The social order which demands the maintenance of personal bonds between countryman and townsman carries with it the seeds of change as well. The young man I have just quoted is caught within the very wheels of this change. A

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369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
452
626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
668 public life who has contributed so much to humour
● 443 and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

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the 1916 Rebellion, have other broad social classes of what used to be called the 'Irishry' made a substantial contribution to organized political life, though all of them figured well enough in patriotic rebellion. 1898 is the crucial date, because then the landlords were displaced in the management of local affairs. The older Grand Jury system, based upon large property qualifications, gave way to the elective County Councils.

At about the same time, land war had broken the last remaining ties between the landlords, as a class, and the social order of the countryside. The growth of the towns since the Famine had by then well established the new relation between the market-town and its rural hinterland which I have described. In the new situation, the shopkeeper and the publican could best represent the united interests of the social order of which they were, in their own way, an important part.

All nations infuse political forms with their own genius. The Irish were not slow to do so; they soon made their own infusion. The reciprocities of a familistic order, in which sentiment and habit found effective organization, were the materials they had at hand. The bonds between town and countryside provided channels through which the infusion could flow.

For, as I have tried to show you, the shopkeeper-publican occupied then, and still does, a strategic place in the organization of the country-

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443 661 626 side. From that point of vantage he could serve many ends. His business depended upon the social role he performed; the countryman expected favours for favours rendered. He knew best the direct personal approaches of social obligation. So, at first, geese and country produce besieged the new officers and magistrates; a favourable decision or a necessary public work performed was interpreted as a favour given. It demanded a direct and personal return. 'Influence' to the countryman was and is a direct personal relationship, like the friendship of the countryside along which his own life moves. Like money, 'influence' was a somewhat mysterious entity; it seemed to be a powerful agent for both good and evil. But its real content seemed understandable enough; it was an easily recognizable social bond.

Then, too, the shop and the pub was and is the countryman's metropolitan club. The man who worked it was a friend and kinsman, one of one's own kind. Near-urban prestige made him a superior, as one in touch with seats of power, fashion and law. But it made him no more, in the last analysis, than a *primus inter pares*. In all this, the conventional moralistic concept of public administration might well be little developed, on both sides. But there was much popular wisdom.

For the shopkeeper-publican dealt effectively first with the realities in which life, his own and his country constituents', is fashioned. To cry corrup-

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tion is to mistake the issue. To enforce a political morality without emotional conviction would be false conversion indeed.

Thus, the shopkeeper-publican-politician was a very effective instrument, both for the countryside which used him and for himself. He might perhaps exact buying at his shop in return for the performance of his elective duties, as his enemies charge: but he also saw to it that those duties were performed for the very people who wished to see them done. Through him, as through no other possible channel, Ireland reached political maturity and effective national strength. That strength persists today, despite superficial strife and internal growth and change. And it persists by virtue of its connection with the society from which it springs.

For a social order, we can see clearly now, is a thing of very wide inclusions indeed. The same set of dispositions runs right through, from the 'west room' of remote Luogh to the political life of the market-towns and cities of Ireland. In this study, for instance, we began our examination of the countryman's way of life with a discussion of 'old custom'—folklore and folk-belief. By now it is clear to you, I think, that 'old custom' is more than a dying survival of an age-old habit. It is part of a larger whole, a whole which in its total is co-extensive with the total-pattern of the life of which old custom is still a part. Our two original ex-

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114 221 settlement, the baile or townland, kept its significance and its importance. In many cases what has passed for nomadism has been the ancient and normal practice of seasonal movement to the hill pastures, which is still not entirely abandoned and has left many traces in the life and landscape of the country (Chapter 6).

181 462 In essentials Ireland is and has been a peasant country, and it may be well to examine objectively some of the general characteristics of peasant society. A permanent link with the soil on which man lives and works is the essence of a peasantry; and in this work of the fields woman co-operates with man. For her, however, field work is a secondary task since her main interests must lie in the house and in the milking of the stock. Work with spade and plough and the care of the draught animals is for the men, although carrying—necessarily done by women in primitive communities where the men must have their hands free to use their weapons—often remains an activity of the peasant woman where not entirely superseded by animal transport. Where fishing and shore-collecting engage the men's attention the women's sphere of action and responsibilities are widened.

181 323 Among tasks in which the women of some peasantries play a leading part is the making of domestic pottery, but this tradition, though strong in Neolithic Ireland, gave way to the use of metal "pots" and vessels of wood, the making of which was the work of the men. Nor have local survivals of hand-made pottery, like the Barvas ware of the Hebrides, been recorded here.

181 ● 443 796 Periodic gatherings for exchange and social intercourse are a feature of peasant life which has contributed to the growth of towns. The immemorial meetings in fairs and markets have been weakened by modern means of transport and by government marketing boards; and in some parts of the country the whole fabric of rural society is being undermined in consequence. As in North Africa to-day, the fairs were often held near some ancient burial place, and the assemblies were linked with religious festivals which brought

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people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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in the combined pastimes of feasting and foretelling the future, 796
and cabbages figure in many an old game, for they are of 221
ancient lineage : the potato, barely three centuries introduced,
has not displaced them in traditional ceremony. It is the
young folks' day. Many of the games played turn upon the
theme of identifying the future husband, and we shall see in
the following chapters that match-making and marriage were
among the functions of the great festivals, closely linked up
with the magic of the earth's increase and the prosperity of
crops and animals.

In parts of Ireland curious traditions attach to St.
Martin's Eve (November 10th) and the feast on the following
day. A sheep or a fowl is ceremonially killed and its blood [782]
sprinkled in the corners of the house. No wheel must turn on
the day of the festival. Finally there are the mid-winter
celebrations, now marked by Christmas and New Year, which
carry the year round towards St. Bridget's Eve. On St.
Stephen's Day (December 26th) the hunting of the wren was
formerly an occasion for general revel : it is now little more
than a children's game.

We must conclude this chapter with some suggestions, 443
necessarily brief and tentative, as to the importance of these 527
seasonal gatherings in the social and commercial life of peasant
Ireland. From very early times the major ritual assemblies of
the year provided opportunity for exchange of goods, of
livestock and of news, and for the maintenance of folk
tradition and bardic skill. In ancient Ireland it is recorded
that there were two kinds of assemblies, the " aonach " for
pleasure and the " aireacht " for business, but it seems
probable that, like the great fairs of recent times, they served
both purposes. It is suggestive of the ritual and religious
element in the old assemblies that they generally met upon
hill-tops—often the sites of prehistoric burials—and that they
took place at the fixed times marking the beginning of the
Celtic seasons. May and November remain the favourite
periods for country fairs, and the hiring fairs were always held
at these times. A century ago the February and August fairs
were also of considerable importance. The Old Lammas Fair

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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443 527 at Ballycastle, for instance, lasted a full week and though now limited to a single day is still the great event of the year in north Antrim. August and perhaps February were closely associated with the sale of sheep, the May and November fairs with cattle. In the early 19th century the great fair of Ballinasloe in Co. Galway handled as many as 20,000 cattle and 90,000 sheep. "Their whole thought," wrote Knight of the Mayo peasantry about that time, "seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging." "A yard of linen or a couple of chickens," says Arthur Young, "will carry an unemployed hand ten miles."

443 366 It is by the fairs and not by the calendar that the countryman dates events. It may be observed that the popularity of fairs, with their emphasis on livestock, illustrates the strength of the pastoral tradition. They have been something of an obstacle to good husbandry because they occur at the changes of the seasons and thus interfere with field work, particularly with harvest. Nowadays most of the fairs are associated with urban settlements, but the name "Fair *Hill*" still clings to the streets where they are held, and many a town has its fair hill just outside. On such sites tents were formerly erected for refreshment, and there are certain old fair grounds now abandoned where you may see the grassy foundations of the huts and the fire holes where the giant cauldrons were boiled. In the ancient aireachts streets of booths were set up for the fair period, so that they might be described as temporary towns. Professor MacNeill has put forward the thesis that these were the "cities" named by Ptolemy in his description of Ireland.

369 361 This brings us to the problem of urban origins. It is perhaps true to say that the fair used to be regarded as the product of the town, but recent research supports the view that the fair precedes the town and was one factor in its rise. Apart from comparative evidence drawn from certain north African communities, for instance, anyone who has watched a small town on fair day must get the impression that he is looking at something which has been going on throughout the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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ages. He sees the country taking complete possession of the town, blocking its streets, ignoring its traffic: he is in the presence of a force older and more fundamental than the town which has given it hospitality (Fig. 110).

When we inquire into the origins and antiquity of the Irish towns we find that very few go back to pre-Norman times, while it is abundantly clear that periodic gatherings in "temporary towns" are far older. The pre-Christian fortress-palaces such as Tara and Navan did not survive into historic times, and as a rule the church in Celtic lands had no civic interests, though many a confiscated monastic site was revived as the nucleus of a town when occupied by English troops in the 16th century. Some coastal cities such as Dublin and Waterford were founded by Norsemen, but most of the inland towns grew up as castle-market-towns during the Anglo-Norman period or in the plantations of the 16th and 17th centuries. To-day the five chief seaports, none of them strictly "native," contain one quarter of the total population: very few inland towns have more than 10,000 people, and only one of these is outside the industrial Six Counties. Most of the fair centres have a population of from 500 to 5,000: there are 187 towns of this size in Eire. There are 202 "towns" with from 200 to 500 inhabitants and only 25 with more than 5,000 (Fig. 107).

It is to these small towns, scattered at convenient intervals of 10 or 15 miles up and down the country, that the fairs have been attracted, the centre of authority and administration becoming the centre of exchange. Although most of the settlements are of "foreign" origin, they have become thoroughly Irish. The family system and blood-ties link up town and country, and trade follows the personal bond of "friendship," that is, blood relationship, however remote. Over shops and inns it is family names one sees painted up: O'Flynn and Flanagan take the place of the English "General Stores" and "Red Lion." Since the countryman's money comes only at the periodic fairs, he relies on the shopkeeper's credit, and the debt must never be entirely paid off, for that

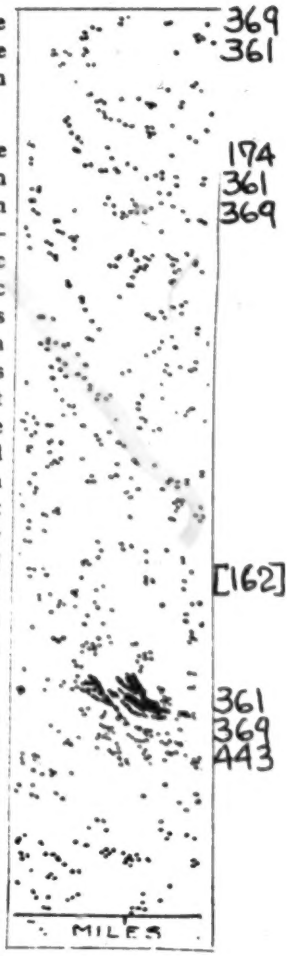

Fig. 107.
A market town with scattered country population. Each dot represents a building.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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361 would "spoil" social relations. Even in the larger towns the
[369] shopkeeper is reluctant to have his bills completely settled by
[443] his customers. These personal ties readily give rise to cliques and municipal corruption: it must be admitted that the

[162]

IRELAND
DENSITY OF
MODERN POPULATION
Scale 1:4,000,000
Reference to shading
Over 512 inhabitants to sq. mile
From 256 - 512 " " "
" 128 - 256 " " "
" 64 - 127 " " "
Less than 64 " " "
George Philip & Son, Ltd.

Fig. 108.

corporate spirit is poorly developed. Similarly the Irish
[344] country town is generally lacking in any native traditions of civic architecture, and even the splendid buildings of Dublin and Galway together with the distinctive court-houses of smaller towns owe much to outside influence. The small

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town consists of streets of houses of peasant style strung end to end, picturesque with their washes of many colours, but perpetuating and even accentuating the filth which can be tolerated in a village setting of streams and fields but which becomes highly objectionable under urban conditions. On the other hand there are some spaciously-planned country towns which have an air of quiet opulence reminding one of the English heritage to which they owe their foundation. I am aware that in saying this I am ignoring the " inner flame " of the Irish towns, but it cannot be denied that externally they have much to learn from the older civic traditions of the sister isle. Dr. Arensberg has analysed the pattern of the country town and described it as " an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order." He shows that, until recent times, its economy has been that of distribution, not production. Banks and pubs and shops do most of the business and owing to the family system " Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation." If we exclude the Lough Neagh basin, all the denser areas of population are coastal and most of the country's manufacturing industries are concentrated in the ports (Fig. 108).

To return to the fair, we have tried to show how the periodic gatherings in which they originated were associated with ritual and emotional experiences connected with the celebration of recurring events such as seed-time and harvest. Breaking the routine of toil, it is characteristic that much licence was permitted on these occasions. Until recent times a strong spirit of revelry and a temporary slackening of the moral code distinguished the great Irish fairs. Even to-day the police or civic guards make allowances for fair day and turn a blind eye to many offences against the law: it is recognized as a time of special licence. Games, dancing and faction fights were the order of the day once the buying and selling were over. Until a generation ago cruel "knuckle-dusters" (Fig. 109) were carried in readiness, and the countryman's heavy felt hat was worn as a defence against the blackthorn shillelagh.

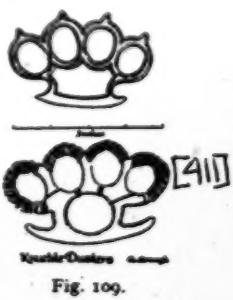

Fig. 109.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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443 blackthorn shillelagh. Trailing the long coat or "trusty"
786 was a recognized invitation for a fight.
578 To the onlooker it appears as though the business of selling is itself in the nature of a fight, such are the hearty and
443 resounding slappings of open hands up and down the street. Then follows the prolonged argument, the cut and thrust of keen bargainers in a circle of interested onlookers, over the amount of "luck money" to be given back to the seller. It is an age-old ritual far removed from the mechanical sale of a pen of cattle at an auction. The establishment of auction sales and latterly of marketing boards not only undermines the business of the country town, but threatens to destroy the intricate fabric which binds together a thousand homesteads in the intercourse of fair day. It is a sad commentary on rural development that in recent years "dole-days" have brought as many people to town as "fair-days."

[493]

Fig. 110. Fair Day.
A bargain is being struck on the left.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or 264
stirabout and milk.

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being [439]
exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small [437]
dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money.

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit dis- 273
tilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent.

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear 291
to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character.

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all [439]
shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local [444]
shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel.

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the [443]
poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction.

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[30]

167 Second, emigration has been of vast benefit to the community; money comes
434 in to most of the homes from America[31] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

443 Third, it is regrettable that the lack
489 of commercial facilities means that eggs, poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [30] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only three barrels a week in winter. The standard content of a barrel is 256 pints.
[304] [31] Many of the children are dressed in American clothes.
[291]

[p. 209(A)]

443 creameries or to dealers brings useful
489 income. The difficulty lies in transport, especially during the winter when the isolation is most acutely felt.

484 Fourth, remote and isolated as their island may be, some of its people have seen much of the world. It is unlikely that many of the young people will remain here in the future; on the other hand, some former emigrants have come back to rest with thankfulness after their labors elsewhere. As one of them said, "America is a good place for the young, but this is a good place when you're old."

000 To summarize, Inishbofin now is neither a tragic island nor a romantic enclave of ancient ways. It is an area in which the work begun by the Congested Districts Board has borne fruit, whose people live reasonably well by crofting standards thanks to the help of emigrants and of the state. So long as the fuel holds out, there seems to be no reason why this island should not remain inhabited; but the problems of so curious a population age structure (p. 208) need investigation by a sociologist, and the cost of maintaining this community to the state and its relatives could well form a subject for an economist. For this island is not, and presumably cannot be, self-supporting under modern conditions.

[p. 209(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XVIII

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

THE Irish countryman enjoys nothing so much as 'a gathering' of people, and when he is forced to leave his native land he does not willingly settle down away from large urban centres. At home a crowd goes to his head like poteen. The daily routine of life on an isolated farm presents him with few opportunities for seeing people from outside his immediate neighbourhood, and on fine summer evenings his favourite pastime is to throw himself against a roadside ditch with a knot of companions and watch the passers-by. That the remarkably large attendances at rural churches and chapels owe something to the social needs of a scattered population is suggested by the phrase, applied to someone who arrives late at chapel: 'he missed the mass but hit the gathering'—he had something worth while for his trouble. In the Irish laws the freeman's rights of assembly were carefully defined: there were assemblies for transacting legal business (the oireacht), and others for commerce and games (the aenach) which came to be called fairs. With the coming of Christianity the traditional gatherings at sacred sites were transmuted into patterns (pardons), at which the new religion was quickened by practices of the elder faiths. In fact most gatherings served more than one purpose. The secret assemblies of Roman Catholics at 'mass rocks' in penal days no doubt also provided opportunities for social and commercial dealings, and the 'sacrament Sabbaths' of Presbyterian Ulster were great gatherings having something of the nature of fairs. Tents and booths were erected for the occasion, and indeed they were popularly known as 'holy fairs'.

Although the fair has lost something of its former significance in Northern Ireland, thanks to Government marketing schemes

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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and purchasing boards, it is still a powerful commercial and social force in the rest of Ireland. In fact the numbers of fairs have increased with the post-famine dominance of the cattle trade, though they have tended to be concentrated in fewer centres as many small fair-towns have been by-passed by improved means of communication. On the other hand the weekly markets have declined or disappeared, their place taken by shops which typically handle drinks as well as groceries, clothing as well as hardware. Thus the fair has retained and even strengthened its magnetic hold on the countryfolk, and though many of its subsidiary functions have been taken over by institutions of more recent origin, the fair itself retains a pagan aura. There is a widespread belief, by no means confined to Ireland, that fair days are always rainy days. This belief may well be justified by climatic averages, but I have heard it explained as a consequence of the lies and profanity, the fights and pagan ways of the fair. Many an ancient fair has become extinct, no doubt because it no longer fulfilled its economic functions, but the explanation usually given is that it was abandoned 'on account of the fighting'.

In Europe, north of the Alpine mountains, the fair as a means of exchange and social intercourse is an institution older than the town, and older far than Christianity. The periodic assemblies of early Celtic Ireland served as temporary towns, and it was probably these sites which Ptolemy marked as cities on his map of the second century A.D. They were held on hill-tops hallowed by an antiquity which archaeology has in some instances traced back to the Bronze Age, and the regions which they served were, we have suggested, already taking shape in the late Neolithic period. Ireland has a number of large enclosures of Neolithic date analogous to Windmill Hill in Wiltshire, which apparently functioned as seasonal meeting places where stock was rounded-up and sorted. An enclosure of rather different type but of similar age—the Giant's Ring near Belfast—was the scene of horse-racing down to recent centuries. On the cairn-crowned Cave Hill, too, overlooking Belfast, crowds used to assemble on Easter Monday 'in accordance with immemorial usage'.[1] We may see in the 'parles

[1] J. B. Doyle, *Tours in Ulster* (1855), 102.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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upon hills', which the Dublin government found so obnoxious in the sixteenth century, the persistent efforts of the Irish to maintain their ancient rights and customs of public assembly. In the Anglo-Norman period and again during the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries towns were deliberately established with the intention of bringing 'civilized ways of living to the wild Irish'. Many of them are characterized by a wide street or square—the 'diamond' in Northern Ireland—where fairs and other gatherings could be dominated and controlled from a castle which overlooked it. These urban settlements were known to the Irish, whose native 'towns' were rarely anything more than disorderly clachans, as 'street towns'. They are found scattered at fairly regular intervals all through the countryside, usually at some river crossing or hill gap where routeways meet. Some of them, well-placed in good fertile country, have expanded, while others have decayed or remained mere villages. Often one will find not far away the old Fair Hill from which the fair was attracted as the facilities of the town outweighed the traditional pull of the inconvenient hill-top. But for long the Irish kept to their own fairs which continued, according to an Act of 1431, to 'take great customs and profits to the depression of the boroughs and the trading towns'.[1] The old assembly places are not entirely forgotten, and it often happened that they were visited for games and horse-racing long after they had lost their function as places of commerce. They are celebrated in local ballads and their sites can still be traced by the grassy mounds which are the remains of booths and cattle pens. The lost fairs of Ireland deserve a study such as is being made of the lost villages of England, but the chief sources for such a study, in the absence of records, must lie in field work and the fast-fading memories of the countryside.

The fairs were formerly organized in a recognized sequence of goods and livestock, terminating in sports and horse-racing—and not infrequently in bloodshed. Several of them achieved a notoriety which made their names a byword, and among them none was more notorious, owing partly no doubt to its proximity to Dublin, than Donnybrook Fair. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of 1845 forgets its sober purpose in thus describing

[1] T. W. Freeman, *Ireland*, 95.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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443 543 578 786 it: 'During the week, beginning on the 26th August, is held the notorious Donnybrook Fair, professedly for the sale of horses and black cattle, but really for vulgar dissipation, and formerly for criminal outrage and the most revolting debauchery. It was for generations a perfect prodigy of moral horrors —a concentration of disgrace upon, not Ireland alone, but civilized Europe. It far surpassed all other fairs in the multitude and grossness of its disgusting incidents of vice; and, in general, it exhibited such continuous scenes of riot, bloodshed, debauchery and brutality, as only the coarsest taste and the most hardened heart could witness without painful emotion.' This was by day; 'the orgies of the night may be better imagined than described'. An anonymous writer is quoted as saying: 'We venture to say that there is more misery and madness, devilment and debauchery, than could be found crowded into an equal space of ground in any other part of this our globe, during five times the same space, which is spent at Donnybrook, in one given year'. The *Gazetteer* then recovers itself and offers excuses for 'describing what ought never to have been described'. One regrets rather that the compiler was so overcome by horror as to forget his statistical duties.

543 527 443 [786] The absence of moral restraint which led to extremes of lawlessness at Donnybrook and elsewhere was a normal and characteristic accompaniment of these periodic folk-gatherings. Such moral holidays are a feature of many societies which have not been greatly influenced by urban ways and values. Their purpose appears to be cathartic, but that there is a lingering fertility magic underlying the excitement is suggested by such strange rituals as those which mark the 'Puck Fair and Pattern' of Kilorglin at the head of Dingle Bay in Co. Kerry. The fair is unfortunately not mentioned in the *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, though the village of Kilorglin is described as 'an unprosperous, sequestered, and almost squalid seat of population; and appears to have acquired marvellously little profit from the advantageousness of its position for both inland and seaward trade'. Puck Fair, held every August, is the great event of the year in West Kerry, and lasts three days. 10th August is 'Gathering Day', the 11th is 'Fair Day', and the 12th 'Scattering Day', terms which have no doubt been handed down from days when

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'the order of the fair' was prescribed and the business lasted several days. On the evening of Gathering Day a procession assembles at the bridge and makes its way to the central square carrying (nowadays in a large cage mounted on a lorry) a billy-goat bedecked with ribbons. He is chained by the horns on a high platform erected for the purpose and, supplied with a liberal stock of cabbages, he presides over the fair. Tradition says that the goat used to stand, 'garlanded by greenery' on the old castle which was erected here by the Geraldines in the thirteenth century. The business of the fair is the sale of live-stock, and as with many another large fair it is a traditional gathering place for the tinkers who in Ireland take the place of the gypsies. On the evening of Scattering Day the Puck is borne triumphantly back to the bridge. The popular explanation of the custom is that it commemorates an occasion when the noise of goats warned the Irish of advancing English forces, but it is more reasonable to see Puck as a symbol of fertility and good luck. 12th August is Old Lammas, and Lammas Day, the 1st August, was known to the Irish as 'Lewy's Fair', in memory of a pre-Christian deity. This season of high summer has many associations with the pastoral freedom of the hills, with young people and with dancing and courting. There are traditions of other Puck Fairs in the south of Ireland, and there were certain fairs at which a white horse was paraded through the assembled crowds and then tied up to preside over the proceedings.

Another celebrated gathering place was the great fair of Ballinasloe, which brought such fame to this Galway town that the *Gazetteer* describes it as 'the cynosure of much the larger part of the western province of Ireland', so prosperous that even its poorer quarters, 'a segregation of lanes, and houses, and cabins, aggregately repulsive', were yet 'greatly less haggard than what constitutes the whole of many a third or second rate town in Ireland'. The fair was held from the 5th to the 9th of October, and during the first half of the nineteenth century the average numbers of sheep and cattle offered for sale were respectively 90,000 and 12,000. Ballinasloe Fair served the west of Ireland in much the same way as the great trysts of Crieff and Falkirk served the Scottish Highlands in the days of

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the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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as they are called, were born in the mountain country of Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, adjoining the rich plains of the Pale where their ancestors sharpened their wits on the English settlers. Many stories are told of the tricks by which 'the goatmen' disposed of their animals before they reached their goal at Barnet Fair, of billy-goats sold to the innocent English as good milkers or as an infallible means of keeping a garden free of weeds. 'Every guy who comes here selling cloth', said a Canadian rancher, 'tells me he is from Slieve Gullion. It must be some city.'

Although the export of live cattle from Ireland was prohibited, in the interests of British farming, through most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the short sea-crossings from north-east Ireland enabled dealers to ship them to southern Scotland. The embargo was lifted in 1765, and by the early nineteenth century many thousands of cattle were reaching Portpatrick and being driven to the fairs at Dumfries and Carlisle, and farther afield to Barnet in Hertfordshire and St. Faith's near Norwich. Many Irish harvesters and other summer migrants followed the trails trodden by Irish cattle and their drovers, but after 1830, with the coming of the steamship, Glasgow, the Mersey and Holyhead became, as they remain, the chief points of entry for both animals and men.

Before the agrarian revolution and the import of feeding stuffs made it possible to keep stock through the winter, the months of October and November were critical for the farmer, who had to dispose of many of his animals at this time. The trade is now better distributed through the year, but although monthly fairs have become general since the famine, the sales vary a good deal from month to month, and the important fairs still fall at the turning points of the pastoral year, particularly in May and November. The spring fairs of February and March and the Lammas fairs of July and August were to a large extent concerned respectively with horses and with sheep and wool, but those of May and November were the great cattle fairs and also the hiring fairs. We are reminded that the Celtic year in pre-Christian times had only two seasons, winter and summer, and that the first days of November and May are still the Irish gale-days, the times when rents fall due.

443 437 One may readily see how this came about, for these were the times when the stock was gathered and sorted, and dues were paid to the overlords in cattle. In the ordinary business of the fair exchange and barter gave way in time to money transactions, but one has only to visit a cattle fair to sense that the noisy ritual of assessing values and the prolonged bargaining have come down from a time before the use of money was general. The vigorous hand-slapping by which bargains [201] are sealed in tight-lipped silence could derive from the days when different languages were spoken at the fairs. Apart from the difference between English and Gaelic it should be remembered that in many districts pockets of non-Gaelic speech, perhaps even of non-Aryan tongues, survived well into the Christian era. Another interesting accompaniment of the con- [777] cluded bargain is the piece of money, the luck penny, which the seller hands back to the purchaser as a gesture of independence when a price has finally been agreed on. Many a fight [578] has begun because a buyer has been dissatisfied with the amount of his luck money. Similar bargaining took place when a servant was being hired for the half year, and he received his earles or earnest money as a sign that the contract was concluded, handing over to his employer his bundle of clothes in return.

543 [805] The countryman will find any excuse for going to the fair, and it is his proud boast that he has seen so many fairs. It is by the fairs, and not by the calendar, that he measures time and dates important events in the life of the community. 'Their whole thought seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging', it was written of the Mayo peasantry in 1836,[1] and in the seventeenth century we find this comment on 'the inferior rank of husbandmen' in Westmeath: '(they) are very crafty and subtile in all manner of bargaining, especially in their dealings in fairs and markets'.[2] Your luck at the fair might depend 777 on the colour of the hair of the first person you met on the road, 543 and it was unlucky to be passed on the way, so that horsemen riding at full gallop were not merely trying out their paces for the races which followed. For good luck you should carry with

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 104.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 115.

1 [i.e. the seasons and rent days 260 dating from 1 May and 1 November. — Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 83), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts, binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints' days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1] See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland, 1796–97*, 250.
[2] R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 253.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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361
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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are Low, High, Castle, and Terrace. 133 311 [361] [172]

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as "shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the community. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to discuss matters of a private nature over drinks. 361 34 366 366 276 [443] [521]

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

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quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

"Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

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recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,